

# WEST END CITIZENS ASSOCIATION

Rockville, Maryland



September 2021

## YOU ARE INVITED!

To the West End Citizens Association  
GENERAL MEMBERSHIP MEETING



Thursday, October 14, 2021, 7:00 PM

### Vitality of Town Center

Guest Speaker

**David Levy**

Assistant Director,  
Planning and Development Services  
City of Rockville

Join Zoom Meeting:

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/85633589672>

Meeting ID: 856 3358 9672

Audio Call Only: 301-715-8592

President: Brian Shipley  
Vice President: Noreen Bryan  
Vice President, Outreach: Tracy DiGioia

#### WECA Officers

Treasurer: Jen Timmick  
Corresponding Secretary: Jane Pontius  
Recording Secretary: Margaret Magner

All residents of the West End over 18 years of age are members of the West End Citizens Association (WECA). If this newsletter was delivered to your door, YOU ARE A WECA MEMBER.

This newsletter was delivered by your WECA Block Captain: \_\_\_\_\_

## PRESIDENT'S NOTE

-Brian Shipley



Earlier this year, we surveyed your West End Citizens Association (WECA) Block Captains for feedback on fostering a stronger sense of community and identifying issues of importance to their neighborhoods. As voting members of WECA's Executive Board, Block Captains represent one or more of the nearly 50 block areas that comprise our neighborhood. Based on the survey responses, the top five most important issues are:

1. Vitality of Town Center
2. Impact of I-270 expansion
3. Pedestrian safety
4. Quality/availability of green space, and
5. Traffic in/through the neighborhoods.

As WECA begins its 2021-22 year, I'm excited to continue the momentum started last year to address these issues. Fortunately, the Neighborhood Plan approved by the Mayor and Council in August 2021 provides the framework to advocate for most of these issues. In addition, we have a standing committee to monitor the I-270 expansion project and represent our interests.

The most important issue raised was the vitality of Town Center. We recognize the importance of engaging with the City to ensure Town Center remains a daytime, evening, and weekend activity center that is easily identifiable and pedestrian-oriented, with a mix of uses and activities. In the coming weeks, I will meet with other Rockville community organizations to explore ways we can work together to enhance and maintain a vibrant city center. I have invited Mr. David Levy from the City's Planning Department to discuss the vitality of Town Center at our General Membership meeting.

**COVID-19 Etiquette.** The WECA Officers agree that getting back to in-person WECA meetings, being able to gather with our neighbors, and having a WECA community gathering will all help foster a stronger sense of community. For now, some of these ideas will remain on hold as we continue to social distance and conduct WECA meetings virtually.

**How to get involved.** Consider serving your micro-community as a WECA block captain. If interested, please email [margaretmagner@nyc.rr.com](mailto:margaretmagner@nyc.rr.com). We encourage our Block Captains to find new ways to engage with residents. We are also challenging ourselves to increase community involvement and ensure that your interests are reflected in WECA projects. Please visit the WECA website at <https://www.westendrockvillemd.org/> to stay abreast of what we are working on and learn how to help. You'll find information on WECA motions, actions, points of contact, and ongoing projects.

**Sign up for WECA email messages and watch our Projects page** for updates on our latest initiatives.

WECA needs your views and support to continue to be a strong voice for our community. We look forward to seeing you at the October 14<sup>th</sup> General Membership Meeting to discuss how we can collectively support the vitality of Town Center. Thank you for all you do to make our neighborhood such a welcoming and wonderful place.

My Best,  
Brian Shipley  
President, West End Citizens Association  
[shipley.brian@gmail.com](mailto:shipley.brian@gmail.com)

Join us on October 14<sup>th</sup> at 7 p.m. as we forge a path forward to supporting projects and activities affecting Town Center

### STAY IN TOUCH BETWEEN NEWSLETTERS!

Join our email list—over 500 of your West End neighbors regularly receive important alerts and community news. Your email will be used **only** to send occasional emails about issues of interest and concern to West End residents.

**Sign-up is simple.**

**Subscribe at [westendrockvillemd.org](https://www.westendrockvillemd.org/).**

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Go to: <https://www.facebook.com/WECARockville/>  
or search WECARockville.

## MAXIMUM BUILDING HEIGHT PRESERVED ALONG WEST SIDE OF N. WASHINGTON ST

In the spring WECA polled residents of the West End to see whether or not they favored increasing building heights along the west side of North Washington Street. Currently, these properties, which sit on the western edge of Town Center, are zoned for a maximum height of 45 feet. As part of the deliberations for the 2040 Comprehensive Master Plan, it was proposed to increase the maximum height to 75 feet, which would have allowed seven-story buildings.

***74% of respondents to the survey opposed increasing the maximum height.***

In addition, more than two-thirds (68%) of West End residents want to preserve retail and commercial

businesses in this location. The current zoning would allow mixed use with residential above commercial businesses.

Survey results were provided to the Mayor and Council through WECA testimony, and the 45 feet limits were preserved. The final decision of the Mayor and Council, which is incorporated in the 2040 Comprehensive Master Plan (p. 274), states:

*“The current zoning for most of these properties is MXNC (Mixed Use Neighborhood Commercial), which limits building heights to 45 feet, with an opportunity to build somewhat taller based on providing such communities needs as additional parks or open space and/or affordable housing. No change in height limits is recommended, though adjustments to the incentives for permitting additional height should be addressed.”*

Zoning revisions in the next year or two will be the method for adjusting incentives.

Thank you for your input, and please continue to voice your opinions and concerns on similar issues.

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# NEIGHBORHOOD PLAN ADOPTED

With approval by the Mayor and Council of the Rockville’s 2040 Comprehensive Master Plan on August 2, 2021, the revised neighborhood plan for the West End and Woodley Gardens East/West has been adopted. If you have been reading the WECA newsletter, you know that updating the 1989 Neighborhood Plan has been underway for more than five years. We want to thank the staff, the Planning Commission and the Mayor and Council for considering our proposals and incorporating most of them in the revised Plan.

One of residents’ greatest concerns has been unwanted expansion of commercial enterprises into the neighborhood. The adopted Plan successfully addresses this and forms the basis for reversing zoning that allows commercial development in the historic houses on South Washington and North Adams Streets and portions of West Jefferson Street. By the adopted Plan, the land use for these properties is limited to residential, office and multi-family residential. Retail is no longer allowed.

Now zoning revisions need to be enacted to codify these changes. WECA will work with the city staff to do this.

Further, we will seek appropriate zoning language that supports home-based businesses and institutions while preventing too many or too large enterprises that would change the character of the neighborhood from residential to commercial.

## *Remembering is Resistance*

As we go to press, an important event involving our neighborhood is planned for the end of September.

On **Sunday, September 26**, 2021, the Montgomery County Lynching Memorial Project (MoCoLMP) will hold a [Remembrance Pilgrimage Walk and a Soil Collection Ceremony](#) to honor the memories of Mr. John Diggs-Dorsey and Mr. Sidney Randolph, two young Black men who were lynched in Rockville. The walk will follow the approximate routes taken by the mobs who lynched Mr. Diggs-Dorsey in 1880 and Mr. Randolph in 1896, beginning at the site of the old county jail (now the County Council Building) and ending at Welsh Park. Many West End residents are planning to take part in the events or to serve as volunteers.

The events are part of Remembrance Weekend, organized along with MoCoLMP’s co-hosts, the [Montgomery County Remembrance and Reconciliation Commission](#) and [Montgomery History](#). These events place solemn focus on the racial violence that shaped our history, and also provide the opportunity for fellowship and healing.

Remembrance Weekend information can be found at <https://mdlynchingmemorial.wixsite.com/montco/events2>

### BUSINESS ADVERTISING

1,600 West End households, two distributions per year

|                              | Size                | Cost Per Year |
|------------------------------|---------------------|---------------|
| Full page                    | 7½" wide x 10" high | \$400         |
| Half page inside front cover | 7½" wide x 4¾" high | \$300         |
| Half page                    | 7½" wide x 4¾" high | \$250         |
| Quarter page                 | 3¾" wide x 2¼" high | \$150         |
| Eighth page/business card    | 3¾" wide x 2¼" high | \$ 80         |

## IMPROVEMENTS TO MARYLAND AVENUE

Pedestrian safety along Maryland Avenue has long been a concern for residents.

As part of the City’s FY22 Capital Improvement Program, WECA recommended pedestrian safety improvements to Maryland Avenue that are on track to be completed this fall. Residents had an opportunity to provide feedback when staff from the city’s Department of Public Works held a virtual community meeting on June 24 to share the draft signage and marking plans. The project includes bike lanes, reduced speed limits, and new truck signage.

To accommodate bike lanes in both directions on Maryland Avenue between South Washington Street and Great Falls Road, the city will remove one of the two existing travel lanes on eastbound Maryland

Avenue, resurface Maryland Avenue, remark the pavement, and install bike lane signage. The bike lanes will be distinguished from the vehicle travel lanes with 10-inch pavement lane markings instead of the regular 5-inch markings. The city does not plan to change any other existing lane configurations.

Traveling westbound, speed limits from will be reduced from 35 MPH to 30 MPH after W. Argyle Street. Additionally, new truck restriction signs will be installed to improve enforcement per the Police Department’s recommendation.

Thanks to Emily Bailey for her advocacy for pedestrian safety along Maryland Avenue and to Eric Fulton for his leadership of the Rockville Pedestrian Advocacy Committee (RPAC) and their support of the project. We look forward to these improvements on Maryland Avenue.

For more information, email [transportationinquiry@rockvillemd.gov](mailto:transportationinquiry@rockvillemd.gov).



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## A NEIGHBORHOOD JEWEL

Something wonderful is happening at 203 Forest Avenue in the West End.



New owners Kay Hoch and Joseph Richardson purchased this property in December 2020. A beautiful bungalow home built in 1913 by prominent local builder Franklin H. Karn, the house had been vacant for some time and needed care and maintenance. The new owners applied for historic designation of the property and in July 2021, the Rockville Historic District Commission approved their plans to rehabilitate the house.

The labor of love to restore the property to its former glory is underway. Exterior maintenance will include installing new main and porch roofs; restoring the original windows, doors, and shutters; repairing the pebble-dash stucco walls, porch flooring, railing and columns; and repairing and/or replacing the wood trim, gutters and downspouts. Replacements of original elements will match the original design and materials.

Inside the house, the owners are painstakingly restoring surfaces and rooms, removing wallpaper, and taking down built-in shelving that was not original to the house. The interior work will also involve modern renovation of the kitchen and bathroom spaces.

An interesting focus of this restoration is the incorporation of new green technology where this can be done in concert with the attention to historic detail and accuracy. While the house was built without modern insulation, green technology can make it more

energy-efficient without tearing down the original plaster walls. The owners plan to use heat pump technology for climate control and powering the clothes dryer. Owner Joe Richardson explained that as work continues, in a later phase they hope to build a garage on the property with roof solar panels to gain clean power without placing panels on the historic house structure.

Another focus is the garden surrounding the house. Neighbors have come to admire (and aspire to!) the now-familiar sight of the Hoch-Richardson family at work transforming the landscape around their home, cutting back and removing invasive shrubs and overgrowth which had obscured the house, and preserving and planting native species. One reward yielded by this effort was the discovery and restoration of an ancient stone-lined garden path along the Beall Avenue side of the property. Owner Kay Hoch explained the family is also happy to be part of the wider West End community. “It’s a wonderful neighborhood – warm and welcoming,” she said. The neighborhood is grateful to the family for the vision and commitment to restore this beautiful West End architectural gem to its original glory and make it their green new home.

Residents interested in the City’s historic designation process can find more information here: <https://www.rockvillemd.gov/185/Historic-Designation-Process>

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### West End Citizens Association

For more information about WECA, contact WECA President Brian Shipley ([shipley.brian@gmail.com](mailto:shipley.brian@gmail.com)).

Interested in getting more involved? Consider being a Block Captain! Contact Recording Secretary Margaret Magner at [margaretmagner@gmail.com](mailto:margaretmagner@gmail.com)

## UPDATE ON DESIGN GUIDELINES

WECA strongly supports a Design Guidelines initiative for our neighborhood. With its location between Town Center and I-270, the West End is under constant pressure for development. Increasingly, homes in our community are being demolished and rebuilt by outside developers, and resulting new home construction often stretches from lot-edge to lot-edge, destroying mature tree canopy and creating large impervious surface areas impacting water runoff onto neighboring properties. Our community is particularly vulnerable to this type of development because, unlike other areas of Rockville, the West End is not covered by covenants or Design Guidelines.

Many U.S. communities facing similar challenges have sponsored grass-roots efforts to develop guidelines and standards for new and replacement construction, ensuring that residents have a greater say than outside developers about how construction is done.

Locally, the East Rockville neighborhood partnered with the City in FY21 to successfully complete a Design Guidelines initiative. Residents can read about their process and outcomes here:

<https://www.rockvillemd.gov/2249/East-Rockville-Design-Guidelines>.

***The Mayor and Council and City staff agreed to fund the development of West End Design Guidelines in FY22.***

An architectural consultant will help WECA create Design Guidelines for new and replacement construction in the West End. Our goal is not to suppress neighborhood development or to change existing structures, but rather to ensure that newly built homes or additions contribute positively to the character and environmental health of the neighborhood. The process provides ongoing opportunities for resident input and participation.

If you are interested in participating in the West End Design Guidelines initiative, email Margaret Magner at [margaretmagner@gmail.com](mailto:margaretmagner@gmail.com).

## Local Company, Positive Results, Happy Clients



*Paul provided sound guidance throughout the process. From what to fix, how to stage, open house process, contract review and the closing. His reputation and experience proved to be a huge success for us.*

*Gloria & Randy*

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Paul Hillstrom, Broker





School Year  
2021 - 2022

Students from all over the West End returned to school in person this month.  
We wish them a safe and joyful year of learning!

**CHECK OUT**

**MEET THE LOCALS**  
2nd TUESDAY of the month  
5-7 PM - FREE  
Meet some of our local vendors and learn about their products, all produces within 100 miles. Sample local grocery, wine, baked goods, health and beauty care products and MORE

**HAPPY HOUR**  
MONDAY TO FRIDAY: 4-7 PM  
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